

9.2 Understand the impact motivation can have on sports performance

We take part in sport for a variety of different reasons. Most of us learn our sporting skills in school as part of a compulsory curriculum. As we get older we can choose to increase our sporting activity if we so wish. Our reasons for playing may change over time as we grow older or develop other interests. For us to continue taking part in sport we need to get something in return. Initially enjoyment of the activity for its own sake is sufficient, but as we take it more seriously, playing well and winning also become important. If we do not enjoy the activities or are unsuccessful we are unlikely to want to continue. Whether we want to continue in sport or not depends upon the strength of the drive within us. This drive or desire we call **motivation**.

We all vary in our drive to succeed in sport or life in general; that is we all have different levels of motivation. There are two different types of motivation.

- **Intrinsic (or self) motivation** comes from our own inner drives. Examples include playing for fun and enjoyment, improving fitness and losing weight, the physical pleasure of the activity, performing skillfully and being successful and the pleasure gained from being with others.
- **Extrinsic motivation** comes from rewards and outside pressures. Examples include winning competitions, being praised for our achievements, to satisfy the expectations of parents, teachers and coaches and to fulfil our commitment to our team.

Anyone for sport?

An exit survey at a local sports centre revealed the answers on page 308 to the question 'Why do you come to the sports centre?'



Key point

Motivation is the drive within us to keep playing a sport. Different factors affect our motivation, such as our desire to win and personal enjoyment.



Let's do it!

Working in pairs, list the reasons why the people in the survey take part in sport. Can you think of any other reasons. Discuss why you and your partner take part in sport? Share your answers with the rest of the group.

Personal details	Activity	Reasons for participating
Peggy, 26 years old, one 2-year-old daughter.	Aerobics, twice a week	To meet people, to lose weight and keep fit
Darren, 17 years old, student at local college.	Competitive swimming training five times a week with competitions at weekends. Also attends gym three times a week	Has always been an exceptional swimmer from an early age. Enjoys winning trophies more than training. Has always been trained by his mother who is a coach at the club
Aisha, 14 years old, schoolgirl	Centre in netball team. Trains twice a week with a weekend match	Has always enjoyed playing netball and attends with three very good friends. Winning is not very important to her
Henry, 47 years old, competitive rower.	Trains on weights and rowing machine four times a week. Competitions or river work on Sundays	Gains satisfaction from the physical action of rowing and being part of a close knit team of four. Above all he enjoys performing well
Marika, 21 years old, who wants to join the army.	Five sessions a week including circuits, aerobics and swimming	Failed practical army fitness test. Wants to retake test in three months' time
Wesley, 23 years old, print worker	Trains once a week and plays in local rugby team at weekend	Outstanding player in the team which he captains from scrum half. Now has girl friend who lives 80 miles away and wants to see him more regularly

Increasing motivation

Most of us are motivated by a mixture of different reasons, some internal, some external. As we get older it is the intrinsic motivation that will keep us taking part in sport when the extrinsic motivators are greatly reduced.

All of us are likely to continue with sport if we enjoy the experience and gain some success. The more skillful we are, the more likely we are to be successful, and this success will increase our motivation. Everyone wants to keep fit and healthy and for many people this is a starting point for physical activity and sport. Sport is usually a social activity involving close interaction with others. We all enjoy the company of others and being with like-minded sportspeople often encourages us to maintain our sporting activity. Therefore motivation is likely to be improved by making people more skillful, by making them aware of the value of fitness and health and by offering sport in an attractive setting.

We all enjoy achievement in sport, whether it is swimming a width for the first time, gaining a black belt in judo or completing our first marathon. Goal setting can be highly motivating. However, the goals set must be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-related. Research shows that motivation is closely linked to personal qualities such as personality and mental toughness, the status of people

who give us advice such as parents and coaches and the social situation in which we find ourselves, such as our family and socio-economic status.



Key point

Motivation is our determination to achieve.

There are two types of motivation:

- intrinsic (or self) motivation
- extrinsic motivation.

■ How to become more motivated



Assessment activity 2: Motivation

To achieve a Pass:

- 1 *Describe* the impact of motivation on sports performance, and identify strategies that can be used to maintain and increase motivation. (P2)

To achieve a Merit you must achieve the Pass criteria and:

- 2 *Explain* the impact of motivation on sports performance and strategies that can be used to maintain and increase motivation. (M2)

To achieve a Distinction you must achieve the Pass and Merit criteria and:

- 3 *Analyse* strategies used to maintain and increase motivation for sports performance. (D1)

9.3 Understand the effects of personality and aggression on sports performance

The ability to cope with the psychological demands of sport will vary from one sportsperson to another, largely depending on the sportsperson's personality.



Key point

Our **personality** defines the person we are and involves qualities such as our character and our temperament.

Personality

We all think, feel and behave differently from one another. This is as a result of our different personalities. By **personality** we mean the sort of person we are and it involves such qualities as our character and our temperament. We can also talk about our personality traits, that is, features of our personality, for example, being friendly, being shy and so on. Our traits can influence our behaviour and therefore how we prepare and perform in sport. Some traits are thought to give us an advantage in particular sports. We should remember, however, that although we may have dominant personality traits our actual behaviour can be affected by both our experience and our environment.

Sports psychologists have suggested many ways of looking at the effect of personality on sport. Three of the most well known theories are as follows.

Extroverts and introverts

Two extreme personalities have been described as extroverts and introverts. Most of us are neither one nor the other but somewhere in between. Extroverts are socially outgoing and show great confidence. They are likely to prefer team sports, activities using the whole body and a great deal of activity and uncertainty.

Introverts are less confident and reserved in social situations. They are likely to prefer individual sports, activities with little movement but fine skills and sports with repetitive movements.

Type A and Type B

Type A personalities have qualities such as impatience, intolerance and high levels of stress. Type B personalities have a relaxed, tolerant approach, with lower personal stress. Research has not shown that one particular personality type is preferable to another, although it is likely that Type A would be more likely to succeed in a competitive sporting context.

Hardiness

Hardiness is an important personality trait which has been identified by researchers. It refers to the ability to meet challenges and to cope with difficult times. In sport it would be likely to be linked with mental toughness. People with a high level of hardiness would be likely to have an advantage in the competitive environment of sport. Hardiness involves the ability to make an impact in all sporting situations, to refuse to give up easily and not to give way to helplessness. At the heart of hardiness is confidence, so that 'when the going gets tough, the tough get going.'

Research suggests that although we differ in our hardiness, the techniques used to improve mental toughness can be used to influence this trait.



Key point

Our personality can influence our likely success in sport. Personality theories include:

- extrovert and introvert,
- type A and type B
- hardiness.



Assessment activity 3: Personality

To achieve a Pass:

- 1 Describe personality and identify how it affects sports performance. (P3)

Aggression

The competitive nature of sport ensures that aggressive behaviour will often be seen. However, some aggression is desirable in sport and some is unacceptable. Aggression usually involves an attempt to harm somebody. In sport we can consider an act to be aggressive if the intention is to harm a person outside the laws of the event, such as punching an opponent in football. This is known as hostile aggression and is totally unacceptable. Another form of aggression occurs when a player uses aggression not primarily to hurt the opponent, but as a means to an end. This is known as instrumental aggression and occurs for example when pushing an opponent out of the way in order to receive the ball. Both hostile and instrumental aggression, however, fall outside the accepted rules of most sporting activities and would not be encouraged.

Aggression or assertiveness

Aggressive behaviour that is within the laws of the game is more properly called assertion and not aggression. Assertive behaviour is seen as forceful but acceptable behaviour in sport. It may involve the use of legitimate physical force but does not have the intention to harm or injure anyone. Examples would include strong tackles in hockey, competing for the ball in netball and spiking in volleyball.



Key point

Aggression is hostile or violent behaviour or actions. It is often unprovoked and caused by frustration or stress.



■ *Aggressive or assertive behaviour?*

Controlling aggression

Competitive sport brings out strong emotions including frustration and aggression. These emotions need to be channelled into positive action. This in turn is more likely to lead to a successful performance. The following strategies can be used to channel aggression.

- Ensure fitness and skills are sufficient to cope with the competitive demands of the sport in order to minimise frustration.
- Exposure in training to potentially aggressive situations to enable sportsperson to develop skills to cope in the competitive environment.
- Encourage the sportsperson to focus attention on the next sporting action rather than on what has just happened.
- Develop performance routines which will move the player on from any recent frustration in the sporting activity.
- Develop breathing techniques to use at times of stress to encourage relaxation and to help concentration.
- Encourage thought stopping to remove negative or worrying thoughts which interfere with the sporting performance.
- Encourage self-talk to help cope with the stress of the competition and any problems with the performance.



Key point

Aggression in sport is seen as the attempt to harm others outside the laws of the event. Types of aggression include:

- **hostile aggression** – unacceptable
- **instrumental aggression** – unacceptable
- **aggressive behaviours within the laws of the game (assertion)** – acceptable.



Assessment activity 4: Aggression

To achieve a Pass:

- 1 *Describe* aggression and identify strategies that can be adopted to control it. (P4)

To achieve a Merit you must achieve the Pass criteria and:

- 2 *Explain* strategies that can be adopted to control aggression. (M3)

To achieve a Distinction you must achieve the Pass and Merit criteria and:

- 3 *Evaluate* the strategies that can be adopted to control aggression. (D2)

9.4 Be able to assess your own attitudes and mental skills, and plan a programme to enhance your attitudes and mental skills in relation to sports performance

Assessment

In order to assess and improve our mental toughness we might find it useful to use a SWOT analysis. By this we mean examining our current strengths and weaknesses in relation to our mental toughness. We can then look at the opportunities available to improve our mental toughness as well as dealing with any threats which might reduce our performance.



Key point

Using SWOT we can identify the following points in our sporting performance.

- **S** – strengths – positive points.
- **W** – weaknesses – negative points.
- **O** – opportunities – potential to improve.
- **T** – threats – barriers to improvement.



Let's do it!

Use the case study analysis as a model to carry out a SWOT analysis of your own mental toughness during your most recent competition.



Case study

Game, set and match continued

Look at the following SWOT analysis of Ravi which he and his coach have carried out up to the point in the case study.

	Details
Strengths	<p>Ravi was the fittest he had ever been</p> <p>He felt able to win the competition</p> <p>Ravi had worked on his backhand drive, one of his weaker shots, in training with his coach</p> <p>He started the match well</p> <p>He recovered his composure in the sixth game and produced a good serve at a vital moment</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Ravi was annoyed with himself and his dad</p> <p>Ravi had wasted time on his computer</p> <p>Ravi had not got his kit ready the previous day</p> <p>They were delayed leaving home on the morning of the competition</p> <p>His father was not familiar with the route and did not allow enough time for the journey</p> <p>Ravi was not familiar with this tennis centre</p> <p>His father's comments in the car had put extra pressure on Ravi to which he had responded angrily</p> <p>His lateness in arriving caused a shortened warm up and criticism from his coach</p> <p>He had not worked with his coach to develop strategies in order to deal with his first opponent, Larry Diver</p> <p>He was focusing on the strengths of his opponent's game during the warm up</p> <p>He was not totally confident that his backhand would hold up in the game situation</p> <p>He allowed negative thoughts to flow through his mind after double faulting in the first game and again when he was 2–4 down in games</p> <p>He took his frustration out on the umpire and received a warning for his bad behaviour</p> <p>At the critical moment in the sixth game he allowed negative thoughts to intrude once more</p>
Opportunities	<p>He has the support of his father which he should show he appreciates. He could improve his pre-preparation by familiarisation with the venue, detailed route planning and timing, early kit and equipment preparation and sufficient rest and sleep</p> <p>He could arrive in plenty of time to be able to relax and go through his pre-arranged warm up with the help and support of his coach</p> <p>Knowing his opponent's strengths prior to the match, he and his coach could have prepared suitable strategies to beat him</p> <p>He could work with his coach in training in order to develop confidence in his own ability</p> <p>Also in his training he could develop the skills of focusing on the strengths of his own game</p> <p>He could use mental rehearsal prior to each serve</p> <p>He could also work on thinking techniques to maintain his concentration during the game</p> <p>In order to avoid negative thoughts he could use thought stopping techniques</p> <p>At critical times in the game he could use self-talk to maintain his focus on the important points of his technique</p>
Threats	<p>His father's support will decline if Ravi does not improve his commitment to the sport and his appreciation of his father</p> <p>His coach's commitment and support will decline if Ravi does not show a more serious approach and improve both his pre-preparation and match preparation</p> <p>Ravi will not fulfil his sporting potential because he does not take the mental training seriously enough</p> <p>Fitness and high level skill are not sufficient at the top level; mental toughness is also a vital ingredient for success</p>



Assessment activity 5: SWOT analysis

To achieve a Pass:

- 1 Assess your own attitudes and mental skills, *with teacher support*, in a selected sport, identifying areas for improvement. (P5)

To achieve a Merit you must achieve the Pass criteria and:

- 2 *Independently* assess your own attitudes and mental skills in a selected sport and explain areas for improvement. (M4)

Programme

Once we have assessed our mental toughness using a SWOT analysis we can improve our mental toughness through a six-week training programme. In order for the programme to be successful it is essential to produce a set of goals against which progress can be made. In the mental toughness training programme which we have devised for Ravi we have used the SMART goals as a framework.



Key point

SMART target setting consists of setting targets that are:

- S** – specific – they say exactly what you mean
- M** – measurable – you can prove that you have reached them
- A** – achievable – you can reach them in the next few weeks
- R** – realistic – they are about action you can take
- T** – time related – they have deadlines.

Look at the following six-week programme which has been prepared for Ravi based on the SMART goals described above.



Let's do it!

Use this as a model to prepare and carry out a six-week training programme to improve an aspect of your own mental toughness.



Case study

Game, set and match continued

Six week programme to improve Ravi's mental rehearsal and self-talk techniques:

- Weeks one to three: teach Ravi to use a mental rehearsal technique.
- Weeks four to six: Ravi to practise mental rehearsal and develop self-talk techniques.

Week one: Sit down with Ravi and ask him to describe in detail one of his most successful serves. Get Ravi to continuously replay it in his mind and ask him to describe what the serve looked like, how Ravi felt about it, the sounds, sights and feelings surrounding the serve. Ravi needs to develop a very clear, vivid picture of this successful serve which he can recall at will. (This process will take 10–15 minutes to complete.) During the rest of the training sessions, from time to time ask Ravi to recall this image of his successful serve, just before he serves in training. Check that he finds this form of mental rehearsal helpful.

Week two: Repeat the process and if necessary refine Ravi's image of his successful serve. Ask Ravi to replay the successful serve in his mind prior to each of his serves in training. Check with him from time to time that he is following this process. Also monitor the number of successful compared to unsuccessful serves and give feedback to him as well as asking Ravi for his views.

Week three: Organise a competitive match as part of the training session. Remind Ravi to use the mental rehearsal of the serve before serving. Monitor the results of Ravi's serving. Discuss with Ravi any improvements in the consistency of his serves and how successful the use of mental imagery has been.

Week four: Reminder to Ravi to continue mental rehearsal before each serve during practice. Prior to the start of the training session, ask Ravi to concentrate on his own performance and to be positive at all times. Suggest that he might find it helpful to make a few quiet comments to himself at the end of each rally. Remind him that the comments must be

positive and forward looking. At the end of the session ask Ravi to tell you the words or comments he used as self-talk. Explain that Ravi should try to recall all the unspoken comments and not just those which he may have spoken out loud. Ask Ravi to think about his comments and make a short list of the ones which he thinks were the most effective.

Week Five: Organise a competitive match as part of the training session. Remind Ravi to continue mental rehearsal of the serve. Also remind him to use the comments he has prepared at the end of each rally. Insist that he remains positive at all times and looks for the highlights in his performance. Ask him to look for improvements in his play rather than merely the results of each rally.

Ravi should not dwell on his mistakes. After the match ask him to write down his mistakes on the left hand side of a sheet of paper. Then, on the right, he should write down what he needs to do better next time. Ask him to tear the sheet in half, throw away the left-hand side and set about achieving those things listed on the right in training and competition.

Week Six: Organise a competitive match as part of the training session. Remind Ravi to continue the mental rehearsal of the serve and to use the self-talk practised previously.

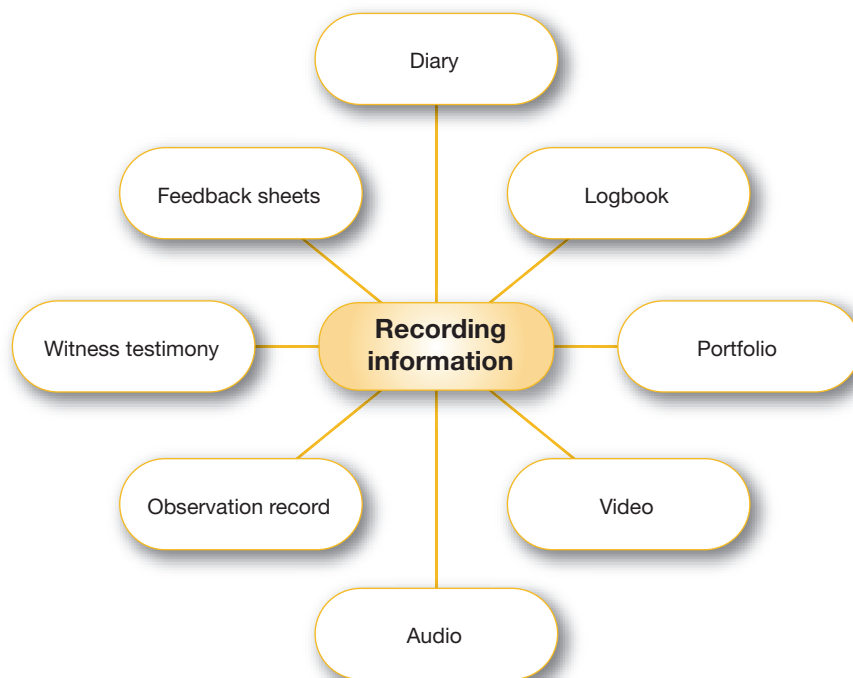
During the match observe very carefully Ravi's response to winning and losing points. After the game, ask Ravi to describe the self-talk he used and whether he thought it was worthwhile. Review particular parts of the game where Ravi was especially successful or unsuccessful and ask Ravi to describe what he was feeling at the time.

Following up this six week programme Ravi should now be able to use a mental image of his serve and also use self-talk effectively in the match situation. Hopefully this will result in improved performance. He and his coach can now look at other aspects of mental toughness in order to further improve his performance.

Recording

It is important that you keep a record of your SWOT analysis and any other evidence you used to assess your current mental toughness. Evidence which could be collected prior to the six-week programme could include:

- video of you taking part in a competitive sporting situation.
- comments from your coach, friends or parents about your mental strengths as well as areas which could be developed. These comments could be written down or recorded on video or audio.

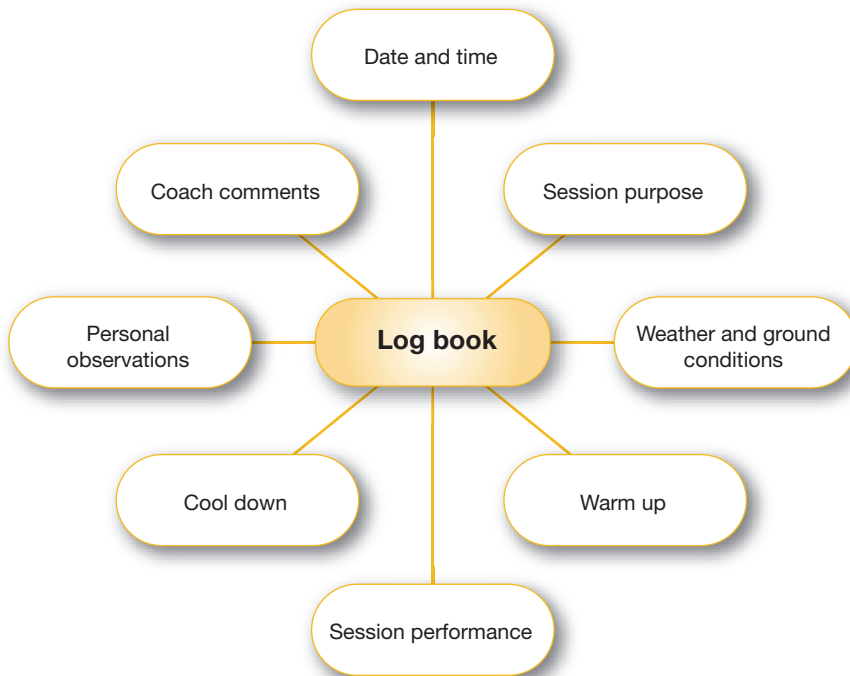


■ Recording information

During the six week programme you will need to keep a diary or logbook in which you should keep a record of your progress.

Diaries and logbooks

One of the easiest ways in which to record and assess a performance is by keeping a diary or a log book. This should focus on all elements of the training session or event, even the weather!



■ Log book



Case study

As part of Ravi's training programme he has kept a diary of his preparation.

Date: 20th August: **Day and time** Thursday evening 7–9pm.

Mental training detail: Bill (my coach) got me to think about my most successful serve and asked me to picture it in my head. He then got me to describe it in detail to him, not just the serve but also everything else that I could picture – the sounds, smells, thoughts in my mind etc.

As we continued the training session, Bill kept asking me to picture this successful serve in my mind just before I was about to serve. At the end of the session Bill asked me if I thought that imagining a successful serve was helpful. I said I did not think it made a lot of difference, but Bill said that with practice it should make a difference.

My thoughts on the training session: I quite enjoyed trying to get a clear picture of one of my successful serves and describing it to Bill. I gave him a lot of detail which I thought he would not want to hear but to my surprise he asked me if I could give any more detail. I found it quite helpful to picture it just before I was about to serve, but once we started training proper again, I forgot to do it consistently. Bill reminded me about once every ten minutes. I don't know if I will be able to remember to do it in the heat of competition.

Now complete these activities.

- 1 Create your own diary for a day of your own training schedule. ✓
- 2 Discuss your activities with other members of your group and compare how each of you differs in your preparation. ✓ ✓